

Message Text

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FM AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6466
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FI CHANNEL

FOR S/IG

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ASIG, SA
SUBJECT: POST MEMORANDUM

1. STATUS OF RELATIONS - AMIR OF EASTERN PROVINCE IS PRINCIPAL LOCAL SAG REPRESENTATIVE, AND CONSULATE GENERAL HAS EXCELLENT WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH HIM AND CONSULTS WITH HIM FREQUENTLY ON PROBLEMS AFFECTING U.S. INTERESTS. INADEQUATE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN RIYADH SAG AGENCIES AND EASTERN PROVINCE LOCAL SAUDI OFFICIALS CREATE COMPLICATIONS IN CONGEN M LATIONSHIPS WITH LOWER OFFICIALDOM, PARTICULARLY IN CONSULAR AFFAIRS, BUT CONGEN MITIGATES THESE DIFFICULTIES THROUGH DEVELOPMENT OF STRONG PERSONAL RELATIONS WITH INDIVIDUALS. CONGEN IS ALSO ABLE TO DRAW ON LARGE RESERVOIR OF GOOD WILL TOWARDS AMERICANS WHICH HAS BEEN CREATED BY ARAMCO DURING ITS 40 YEARS OF OPERATION HERE.

2. ISSUES AND PROBLEMS:

A) POLICY FORMULATION - EXEPT FOR COUNTRY COMMERCIAL PROGRAM, CONGEN HAS LITTLE INPUT INTO POLICY FORMULATION FOR SAUDI ARABIA.
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OCCASIONALLY POST IS ASKED TO COMMENT ON A SPECIFIC ISSUE (E.G., DRAFT CONSULAR CONVENTION), BUT IN GENERAL CONGEN DOES NOT PARTICIPATE IN DISCUSSIONS ON OVERALL USG POLICY ON SAUDI ARABIA. TO OBTAIN CONGEN INPUT EMBASSY MIGHT CONSIDER INVITING CONSUL GENERAL TO PARTICIPATE IN COUNTRY TEAM MEETINGS.

B) MULTILATERAL DIPLOMACY - SAG AND US RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER

COUNTRIES HAVE SOME BUT NOT MUCH EFFECT ON CONGEN'S RELATIONS WITH LOCAL SAG OFFICIALS. USG SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL SOMETIMES CAUSES STRAIN, BUT DECISION BY USG TO SELL F-15'S TO SAUDIS HELPS ALLEVIATE THAT PROBLEM. SAG ADHERENCE TO ARAB BOYCOTT CAUSES SOME DIFFICULTIES FOR US COMPANIES OPERATING IN AREA.

C) MISSION MANAGEMENT - THE POST IS SMALL, AND ALL OF ITS RESOURCES ARE FULLY UTILIZED. ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL AND PHYSICAL PLANT RESOURCES ARE REQUIRED, AND THESE NEEDS ARE DISCUSSED IN FOLLOWING PERTINENT SECTIONS. THE ONLY NON-STATE USG AGENCY AT POST IS ICA, AND COOPERATION BETWEEN IT AND THE POST IS EXCELLENT. BOOM ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN THE AREA OF SAUDI ARABIA AND THE HUGE INFLUX OF RESIDENT AND VISITING U.S. BUSINESSMEN HAVE CAUSED THE POST TO EMPHASIZE COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES SOMETIMES TO THE DETRIMENT OF ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL REPORTING. THE LARGE RESIDENT U.S. POPULATION, WITH THE ATTENDANT WELFARE AND WHEREABOUTS PROBLEMS, AND THE VASTLY INCREASED NUMBER OF VISAS AND OTHER CONSULAR ACTIVITIES CAUSES THE PO AND OTHER SUBSTANTIVE OFFICERS TO BE INVOLVED IN CONSULAR AFFAIRS, THUS LEAVING THEM LESS TIME FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REPORTING ACTIVITIES.

D) POLITICAL AFFAIRS - THERE IS NO POLITICAL OFFICER POSITION AT POST AND LIMITED POLITICAL ACTIVITY IN THIQ

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WEVER, IF

WASHINGTON IS GIVING SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO ASSIGNING THIRD ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL OFFICER TO DHAHRAN, THIS OFFICER COULD BE ASSIGNED TO REPORT ON POLITICAL/SOCIAL/LABOR CONDITIONS IN EASTERN PROVINCE, IN ADDITION TO HIS ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL DUTIES. INFLUX OF TREMENDOUS NUMBER OF FOREIGN WORKERS INTO THIS AREA AND GRADUAL SHIFT IN SAUDI MORES AND CUSTOMS COULD BE SUBJECT OF REPORTS.

E) ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL AFFAIRS - THERE ARE NO MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS PER SE ALTHOUGH THE WORKLOAD OF SECTION IS HEAVILY WEIGHTED TOWARDS COMMERCIAL AFFAIRS, AND THE LARGE NUMBER OF BUSINESS VISITORS SEEKING GUIDANCE TAKES UP GREAT PERCENTAGE OF THE OFFICERS' TIME. THE SECTION IS COMPLETELY INTEGRATED WITH BOTH OFFICERS HAVING BOTH ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL WORK.

OTHER THAN LACK OF TIME, THE MAIN REPORTING PROBLEM LIES IN THE PETROLEUM AREA SINCE THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM IS EXTREMELY SENSITIVE ABOUT OIL PRODUCTION FIGURES OR ANY OTHER FEATURES OF THE SAUDI PETROLEUM INDUSTRY. SINCE THE SUMMER OF 1977, THE CONGEN HAS BEEN UNABLE TO OBTAIN PRODUCTION FIGURES FROM THE MINISTRY ON THE ARABIAN OIL COMPANY AND GETTY. ARAMCO STILL PROVIDES CONGEN DIRECTLY WITH ARAMCO'S FIGURES, BUT THIS COULD CHANGE WHEN NEW

NATIONAL OIL COMPANY IS ESTABLISHED.

THE COMMERCIAL SECTION SHOULD BE EXPANDED, BOTH IN TERMS OF SPACE AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW FSL SECRETARY POSTION. THERE ARE SOME EQUIPMENT NEEDS (E.G., PHOTOCOPY MANCHINE, TELEX, SEPARATE TELEPHONE LINES, CAR AND DRIVER) FOR INCREASED FACILITATIVE ASSISTANCE TO U.S. AND LOCAL BUSINESSMEN.

POST HAS HAD SCHEDULING PROBLEMS WITH USDOC ON TRADE MISSIONS TO DHAHRAN, AND WTDR REQUEST AND TRANSMITTAL PROCEDURES AT WASHINGTON EDN SHOULD BE IMPROVED. USDOC HAS PROCRASTINATED ON POST'S REPEATED REQUESTS FOR TRADE SHOW ON COMPOUND.

F) CONSULAR AFFAIRS - IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY CONSULAR AGREEMENT, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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INFORMATION SHARING AND OTHER FORMS OF COOPERATION WITH LOCAL OFFICIALS ARE ERRATIC. THIS DIFFICULTY IS EXACERBATED BY THE DISORGANIZATION AND POOR INTERNAL COMMUNICATION ENDEMIC IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

LACK OF LANGUAGE CAPABILITY BY INCUMBENT OFFICERS MAKES JOBFMUCH MORE DIFFICULT IN DEALING WITH THE VAST MAJORITY OF LOCAL OFFICIALS, WHO SPEAK ONLY ARABIC.

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FI CHANNEL
EXCEPT FOR ON SAUDI FSL, SECTION HAS HAD COMPLETE TURNOVER IN

FSL PERSONNEL IN ONE YEAR. DIFFICULTIES EXIST IN ATTRACTING AND RETAINING PROFESSIONAL LOCAL EMPLOYEES. THERE IS NO REAL RESERVOIR OF CONSULAR EXPERIENCE IN THE SECTION, A SITUATION WHICH CAUSES SLOW PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING OFFICE PROCEDURES CALLED FOR BY COMPLEX REGULATIONS.

COMPLETE RECIPROCITY IN VISA ISSUANCE IS PROBABLY UNOBTAINABLE GIVEN SAG INSISTANCE ON MAINTAINING A VERY RESTRICTIVE VISA POLICY.

THERE IS A STEADY INCREASE IN IV ISSUANCE ALTHOUGH THE SECTION LACKS MUCH OF THE VITAL FSL EXPERTISE SUCH ISSUANCE DEMANDS. THERE IS ALSO A SMALL BUT DETERMINED GROUP OF YEMENIS VISA APPLICANTS WITH HIGH INCIDENCE OF FRAUD.

HIGHLY SEASONAL NATURE OF NIV ISSUANCE WITH EXTREMELY HEAVY WORKLOAD DURING SUMMER MONTHS (OVER 150 NIV'S PER DAY), CAUSE RESOURCE SCHEDULING PROBLEMS, AND THE NECESSITY FOR HIRING INEXPERIENCED EXTRA HELP DURING PEAK MONTHS. THERE IS A LACK OF SPACE FOR APPLICANTS AND FOR LARGE NUMBERS OF AMERICAN CITIZENS THAT APPLY FOR NOTARIAL AND PASSPORT SERVICES; MAJOR WORKLOAD COMPONENTS.

GREATLY INCREASED NUMBER OF SMALL AMERICAN FIRMS WITHOUT ADEQUATE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GOVERNMENT RELATIONS' OFFICES PUTS STRAIN ON CONSULAR RESOURCES TO DO SCS WORK. COMMERCIAL AND LABOR DISPUTES OFTEN LEAD TO AMERICANS BEING IMPRISONED WITHOUT FORMAL CHARGES OR HEARING. FROM CONSUL GENERAL ON DOWN, ALL SECTIONS OF CONGEN BECOME INVOLVED AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER IN SOME PHASE OF CONSULAR WORK.

G) POST ADMINISTRATION - MOST PRESSING NEED IS FOR AMERICAN GSO POSITION, AND, IF AS WASHINGTON HAS INDICATED, THREE MORE POSITIONS ARE TO BE ESTABLISHED AT DHAHRAN, NEED WILL BECOME EVEN GREATER. SOLE AMERICAN ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER IS STRETCHED THIN NOW IN TAKING CARE OF 69-ACRE COMPOUND AND PRESENT STAFF.

B & F HANDLED ADEQUATELY BY EMBASSY JIDDA AND A POSTJGS HEALTH NEEDS ARE MET BY REGIONAL DOCTOR, EMBASSY NURSE AND USMTM DOCTOR.

COMMUNICATIONS HANDLED BY ONE OFFICER, AND IF HE BECOMES ILL, COMMUNICATIONS SHUTS DOWN. HE IS ALSO UNABLE TO TAKE LEAVE WITHOUT TDY REPLACEMENT AND MUST BE ON CALL 24 HOURS PER DAY. THERE IS NO REGULAR CLASSIFIED POUCH PICKUP AND DELIVERY. BETTER SYSTEM MUST BE FOUND TO ASSURE TIMELINESS OF NON-TELEGRAPHIC CLASSIFIED COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN DHAHRAN AND OTHER SAUDI POSTS. TELEPHONE SYSTEM IS UNRELIABLE AND TO RECTIFY SITUATION A TELEX SYSTEM SHOULD

BE INSTALLED TO TIE IN ALL SAUDI POSTS. IF POSSIBLE, TELEX SYSTEM SHOULD HAVE DOCUMENT TRANSMITTAL CAPABILITIES.

H) DHAHRAN FEELS AT TIMES ISOLATED FROM MAIN STREAM OF US/SAUDI RELATIONS BECAUSE CABLES AND OTHER TRAFFIC ON MANY ASPECTS OF RELATIONSHIP ARE NOT REPEATED FOR DHAHRAN INFOR. THUS, DHAHRHAN MAY NOT LEARN OF BILATERAL AIR NEGOTIATIONS OR OF SAG DISCUSSIONS WITH TOP LEVEL USG VISITORS AFFECTING ALL OF SAUDI ARABIA. AS PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED (PARA 2A), INCLUSION OF CONSUL GENERAL IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COUNTRY TEAM MEETINGS WOULD HELP SOLVE THE PROBLEM.

J) OTHER AGENCIES - ONLY ICA IS REPRESENTED AT THIS POST BUT USG PERSONNEL MAY BE ASSIGNED THIS FALL TO EASTERN PROVINCE FROM JOINT ECONOMIC COMMISSION. BPAO POSITION ONLY ESTABLISHED LAST YEAR, AND ICA BEGINNING TO EXPAND ITS OPERATIONS WITH ADDED OFFICE SPACE. CONSUL GENERAL AND REST OF STATE PERSONNEL WORK CLOSELY WITH BPAO ON VARIETY OF PROGRAMS; E.G., LEADER GRANTS, EXCHANGES, PROMOTION OF U.S. TRADE MISSIONS, GUEST LISTS, INFORMATION PROGRAMS (TV TAPES AND FILMS), AND OTHER PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES.

K) OTHER ACTIVITIES - NO OFFICIAL BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS ARE PERMITTED IN KINGDOM, BUT INFORMAL AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN'S ASSOCIATION WAS ESTABLISHED THROUGH CONGEN EFFORTS. STEERING COMMITTEE OF ASSOCIATION MEETS MONTHLY AT CONGEN AND BOTH ECON/CML OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE.

CONSULATE COMPOUND HOUSES DAHRAN ACADEMY WHOSE ENROLLMENT HAS GROWN TO ALMOST 1300 STUDENTS IN GRADES ONE THROUGH NINE. AS CHAIRMAN OF SCHOOL BOARD, CONSUL GENERAL SPENT GREAT DEAL OF TIME DEALING WITH SCHOOL ISSUES. CONSUL GENERAL NO LONGER CHAIRMAN, AND ECON/CML OFFICER NOW MEMBER OF BOARD.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND SECURITY PROBLEMS FLOW FROM HAVING SUCH A LARGE STUDENT BODY AND ITS PARENT, TEACHER AND STUDENT ACTIVITIES ON COMPOUND. ACADEMY NEEDS TO BE MORE PHYSICALLY SEPARATED (BY WIRE FENCE PERHAPS) FROM REST OF COMPOUND, AND SINCE ALL STUDENTS ARE BUSSED TO SCHOOL, A NEW ENTRANCE TO COMPOUND SHOULD BE MADE EXCLUSIVELY FOR SCHOOL USE.

L) SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL AFFAIRS - ALL REPORTING AND HANDLING OF SCIENCE VISITORS ARE HANDLED BY ECON/CML SECTIONS. WITH DEVELOPMENT OF LARGE NEW RESEARCH CENTER AT UNIVERSITY OF PETROLEUM AND JOINT USG/SAG EFFORTS IN SOLAR RESEARCH, MORE ATTENTION MUST BE PAID TO THIS FIELD.

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3. EVALUATION OF ACCOMPLISHMENT OF POLICIES OR PROGRAM OBJECTIVES.

CONGEN PARTICIPATES ACTIVELY IN OIL COMMITTEE WHICH MONITORS
AND REPORTS ON OIL SITUATION.

BREIFINGS BY ARAMCO AND OVER FLIGHTS OF E.P. OIL FACILITIES,
WHICH CONGEN ARRANGES, HAS HELPED CONVINCE CONGRESSMEN AND OTHER
VIP'S OF IMPORTANCE OF SAUDI OIL TO INDUSTRIAL WORLD AND
VULNERABILITY OF SAUDI OIL FACILITIES

TRADE PROMOTION IS INTEGRAL PART OF CONGEN OVERALL POLICY OBJECT-
IVES, AND CONGEN ARRANGED SEVERAL SUCCESSFUL TRADE MISSIONS,
PROVIDED EXTRA ASSISTANCE TO U.S. BUSINESS VISITORS, ENCOURAGED
SAUDI BUSINESSMEN TO VISIT THE U.S., AND BEGAN A COMMERCIAL NEWS-
LETTER. CONGEN HAS DEVELOPED AND EXPANDED ITS RELATIONSHIPS WITH
THE SAUDI MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT IN THE E.P.

IN FIELD OF U.S.-SAUDI RELATIONSHIPS CONGEN HAS USED ICA MATERIALS
TO INFORM SAUDIS OF USG POLICIES AND OF U.S. LIFE.

THROUGH INTERVENTION WITH LOCAL OFFICIALS, CONGEN HAS OBTAINED
RELEASE OF SEVERAL AMERICANS FROM JAIL AND HAS WORKED CLOSELY
WITH AMERICAN FIRMS IN THEIR DEALINGS WITH SAUDI AUTHORITIES.

IN HUMAN RIGHTS AREA (HABEAS CORPES, WOMEN WORKING, VISAS)
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CONGEN HAS MADE LITTLE PROGRESS ON LOCAL LEVEL, BUT INFLUENTIAL
SAUDIS LIKE AMIR ARE MADE AWARE OF U.S. VIEWS ON HUMAN RIGHTS.
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